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AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USBERLIN 02132

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, US, BZ, GE, OVIP (REAGAN, RONALD)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO BERLIN

1. (LOU) SUMMARY: PRESIDENT REAGAN RECEIVED AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME DURING HIS FIVE-HOUR VISIT TO THE CITY ON FRIDAY, JUNE 12. THE CENTERPIECE OF HIS STAY WAS A SPEECH BEFORE AN ESTIMATED 20,000 PEOPLE IN FRONT OF THE BRANDENBURG GATE. PRESS COVERAGE WAS EXTENSIVE. INDIVIDUAL BERLINERS WITH WHOM TELEVISION INTERVIEWERS AND MISSION OFFICERS SPOKE WERE PLEASED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD COME TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE CITY. THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS TO MAKE BERLIN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER AND LOCUS FOR THE OLYMPICS WERE PARTICULARLY WELL-RECEIVED. CHANCELLOR KOHL AND BERLIN'S GOVERNING
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MAYOR DIEPGEN, SPEAKING BEFORE THE PRESIDENT AT THE GATE, PAID TRIBUTE TO THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO BERLIN. DESPITE AN ANCILLIARY PROTEST MARCH, WHICH ENDED WITH SOME VIOLENCE IN THE RAIN LATER IN THE DAY, THE VISIT REPRESENTED A

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VALUABLE RESTATEMENT OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO BERLIN AND GERMANY. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE PRESIDENT'S ITINERARY INCLUDED A MEETING WITH FRG PRESIDENT RICHARD VON WEIZSAECKER AT THE LATTER'S BERLIN RESIDENCE, A VISIT TO THE REICHSTAG BUILDING, A SPEECH IN FRONT OF THE BRANDENBURG GATE, MEETINGS WITH PERSONS WHO HAD MADE OR WERE MAKING DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY'S LIVELIHOOD, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY'S BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR BERLIN, HELD IN THE OLD CONCOURSE HALL AT TEMPELHOF AIRPORT. THE PRESIDENT'S APPEARANCE AT EACH STOP WAS RECEIVED ENTHUSIASTICALLY .

3. (U) BOTH THE FRG AND THE BERLIN SENAT WERE PLEASED THAT THE PRESIDENT PAID A CALL ON VON WEIZSAECKER, UNDERLINING U.S. SUPPORT FOR BERLIN-FRG TIES. BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT JENNINGER, CHANCELLOR KOHL, AND THE SENAT WERE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SHOWING OFF THE REICHSTAG, THE FORMER ALL-GERMAN PARLIAMENT. WITH ITS EXHIBITION ON GERMAN HISTORY (INCLUDING A SEGMENT ON THE MARSHALL PLAN) AND ITS BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE WALL -- BOTH OF WHICH THE PRESIDENT TOURED -- IT IS A CONCENTRATED REMINDER OF MODERN GERMAN HISTORY AND THE EAST-WEST DIVISION. THE PRESIDENT ALSO MET IN THE REICHSTAG AND SPOKE BRIEFLY TO A GROUP OF "TRUEMMERFRAUEN," THE LABEL GIVEN BY THE BERLINERS TO THE ARMY OF WOMEN WHO, IN LABOR-SHORT BERLIN RIGHT AFTER THE WAR, HELPED TO DIG THE CITY OUT OF THE RUBBLE. THE OFFICIAL POLICE COUNT OF THE CROWD FOR THE

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PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS A NOISY AND FLAG-WAVING 20,000, NOT INCLUDING SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE IN EAST BERLIN WHO TRIED TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE PROCEEDINGS. GOVERNING MAYOR DIEPGEN AND CHANCELLOR KOHL SPOKE FIRST, THANKING THE U.S. FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO BERLIN AND, IN KOHL'S WORDS, EMPHASIZING THAT THE WALL COULD NOT BE HISTORY'S FINAL ANSWER TO THE GERMAN QUESTION.

4. (U) AT TEMPELHOF AIRPORT, THE PRESIDENT MET A SELECTION OF BERLINERS WHO HAD MADE OR ARE STILL MAKING DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY. THEY INCLUDED FORMER AIRLIFT PILOTS, SOME OF THE ORIGINAL BROADCASTERS OF RADIO IN THE AMERICAN SECTOR (RIAS), A BERLIN BRIGADE WALL PATROL, SCHOOL-AGE ESSAY AND COMPUTER CONTEST WINNERS, A PROMINENT RESEARCHER IN THE MEDICAL USE OF

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LASERS, A FORTY-YEAR EMPLOYEE OF THE U.S. MISSION, AND A FORMER EAST GERMAN BORDER GUARD, WHOSE 1961 LEAP OVER THE BARBED WIRE INTO WEST BERLIN BECAME A FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPH. THE AIRPORT BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR BERLIN, WITH THE PRESIDENT'S PARTICIPATION, WAS DESIGNED AS A DEMONSTRABLY AMERICAN EVENT TO WISH THE BERLINERS IN BOTH PARTS OF THE CITY WELL. HELD AGAINST AN ATTRACTIVE BACKDROP OF EAST AS WELL AS WEST BERLIN SCENES, IT HIT JUST THE RIGHT FESTIVE NOTE. KOHL AND DIEPGEN AND THEIR WIVES WERE ON STAGE, AND AMBASSADOR BURT OFFICIATED AS MASTER OF CEREMONIES. IN HIS REMARKS, THE PRESIDENT THANKED U.S. TROOPS FOR THEIR PERSONAL SERVICE TO BERLIN AND PROMISED THAT THEY WOULD STAY AS LONG AS BERLINERS NEEDED AND WANTED THEM.

5. (U) THE VISIT WAS THE LEAD STORY ON FRIDAY NIGHT'S NATIONAL TELEVISION NEWS (BOTH ARD AND ZDF), AND THE LOCAL "ABENDSCHAU" PROGRAM DEVOTED ITS ENTIRE BROADCAST TO IT.

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(A COMPLETE MEDIA ROUNDUP IS BEING SENT SEPTTEL.) COVERAGE WAS FAVORABLE AND COLORFUL. REACTIONS FROM INDIVIDUAL BERLINERS, GIVEN TO BOTH TELEVISION INTERVIEWERS AND MISSION OFFICERS, WAS THAT THE VISIT WAS AN HONOR AND BOOST FOR BERLIN AND THAT IT WAS A THRILL TO SEE THE PRESIDENT. THE BRANDENBURG GATE SPEECH DREW MANY KUDOS FROM OUR CONTACTS OVER THE WEEKEND. LOCAL POLITICIANS AND SPORTS OFFICIALS WERE PARTICULARLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS THAT BERLIN BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER AND HOST, IN BOTH PARTS OF THE CITY, THE OLYMPICS.

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6. (LOU) THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT WAS BOTH PRECEDED AND SUCCEEDED BY ANTI-REAGAN DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH TURNED VIOLENT (SEPTELS). BERLIN POLICE PRECAUTIONS WERE MASSIVE AND KEPT THE DEMONSTRATIONS WELL AWAY FROM THE PRESIDENT, HOWEVER. THE PRESIDENT DREW APPLAUSE FOR HIS REMINDER DURING HIS SPEECH TO THE DEMONSTRATORS OF EXACTLY HOW THEY COME TO POSSESS THE FREEDOM TO DEMONSTRATE.

7. (C) THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT, WITH ITS CLEAR RESTATEMENT OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO BERLIN AND FREEDOM IN EUROPE, CAPPED A SERIES OF VISITS BY THE ALLIED HEADS OF STATE TO WEST BERLIN AND A STRING OF AMERICAN VISITS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE 750TH ANNIVERSARY. FOR WEST BERLIN OFFICIALDOM, THE OCCASION OF THE 750TH HAS REVEALED TWO KEENLY FELT NEEDS: TO COMPETE WITH EAST BERLIN'S EFFORTS TO USE THE ANNIVERSARY TO LEGITIMIZE GDR RULE IN THE EAST, AND TO OBTAIN PSYCHOLOGICAL REINFORCEMENT FROM THE WEST AND PARTICULARLY FROM THE UNITED STATES. THE U.S. IN

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GENERAL, AND THE PRESIDENT IN PARTICULAR, HAVE BEEN STRONG
IN DELIVERING THAT REINFORCEMENT AND IN HELPING TO COUNTER
EAST BERLIN'S CLAIMS. THE BERLINERS -- AND, FROM WHAT WE
CAN TELL, THE FRG GOVERNMENT AS WELL -- HAVE TAKEN THE
LESSON TO HEART. KORNBLUM

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